

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 428

By Ramsey

A RESOLUTION to honor the congregation of First Baptist Church Maryville on the celebration of the church's 150th anniversary.

WHEREAS, we are pleased to recognize those historic churches and their congregations who have dedicated themselves and their resources to spreading the good news of the Gospel in their communities, thereby lifting up society with God's word; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Maryville has worked to improve the quality of both spiritual and temporal life in Tennessee for the past 150 years; and

WHEREAS, in 1868, the Tennessee Baptist Association in Sevier County named Blount County as the most spiritually destitute county in the association, with the 900 citizens of the Village of Maryville being cited specifically; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ben A. Morton, a graduate of Maryville College and Nashville Medical School, moved his family to Maryville in 1868 and instituted church services in his home and at the courthouse; and

WHEREAS, Maryville Baptist Church was chartered in 1871, and in 1876, the congregation moved into their first church building on High Street; and

WHEREAS, in 1908, pastoral duties were assumed by Reverend W.B. Rutledge, whose son Wiley Jr., later served as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Reverend Rutledge, the church moved to a new building on Depot Street in 1914; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, 233 men of the congregation proudly served in the U.S. armed forces; and

WHEREAS, during Reverend James M. Windham's pastorate, the congregation acted in 1948 to change their spiritual home's name to Maryville First Baptist and move into a new building on Lamar Alexander Parkway, where the church is still located today; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Maryville approved the election of single and divorced persons to serve as Deacons in 1983 and permitted women to serve in that same capacity in 1984; the first female Deacon was Mrs. Robert (Norma) Effler; and

WHEREAS, the church added a family life center in 1999 under the pastorate of Dr. John Sharp; and

WHEREAS, for 150 years, First Baptist Church Maryville has served as a community spiritual guide through its many contributions to Home Missions Board funding, Christian fellowship, food and housing for the unfortunate, jail ministry, revivals, African-American inclusion, surrounding churches such as Battle Creek Mission, Friendsville Baptist, Laurel Bank Baptist, McGinley Street, and Wayside Mission, and numerous athletic programs in the family life projects; and

WHEREAS, understanding that their 150th anniversary celebration is not for bricks and mortar but for the people, the pastor and congregation of First Baptist Church Maryville wish to honor those who labor in service of all of our churches, those faithful Christians in whom The Living God planted the founding vision for their church family, the hundreds upon hundreds of Christ's followers who have been their spiritual family, and Christ himself; and

WHEREAS, it is only fitting that we extend our best wishes to First Baptist Church Maryville for many future blessings as the church's exemplary ministry continues to inspire individuals in the Maryville community and the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate the pastor and congregation of First Baptist

Church Maryville on the celebration of their 150th anniversary and wish them much continued success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.